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ABSTRACT

A project is reported that developed a test for students in foreign language in the elementary school (FLES) programs. Relevant tests in Spanish and English as a Second Language (ESL) were reviewed in order to develop a listening and reading test that could determine achievement in a typical FLES curriculum. Pilot testing was conducted with 121 children in three sites in Maryland, Michigan, and Vermont. The sites were chosen to reflect a wide range of FLES program configurations (3-year before-school program, two half-hour classes a week; 7-year sequential program, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week; and 3-year program, 1 hour per day). Test format and content are reported, as is the test analysis in terms of reliability, item difficulty, and discrimination. Reviewers, field tests, and assessments of the statistical quality suggest that the revised FLES Spanish test is now an appropriate instrument for research needs at the Center for Language Education and Research. The test is appended, along with the test administrator's handbook. Contains 2 references. (LB)

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The Development of the FLES Test - Spanish
Final Report

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FLES TEST Summary

The Spanish FLES Test is designed for fourth, fifth, and sixth grade FLES students, whose exposure to Spanish ranges from a minimum of 30 minutes per week to a maximum of 3 hours per week over a period of two to six years. The goal was to design a test that was easy to administer, easy to grade, relatively short (can be given in one class period), and with results that are easy to interpret by teachers and parents. No special training is required to administer the test. Materials needed are: the handbook for the test administrator, test booklets, machine-scorable answer sheets, and a #2 pencil for each student.

I. Background

The Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) studies on foreign language instruction identified as a major need the development of a test for students in foreign language in the elementary school (FLES) programs. The test was designated as essential for conducting certain CLEAR studies and at the same time was seen as filling a significant gap in language assessment by meeting the needs of a major target audience -- those students who begin foreign language study in elementary school.

This test development project began with a seminar to discuss the general CLEAR assessment needs in the broad context of foreign language and English as a second language (ESL). A systematic needs assessment of all relevant CLEAR studies resulted in the recognition of a strong need for a Spanish test in six studies, mainly in upper elementary grades, and for an ESL test in two studies at various grade levels. To determine existing resources in these areas, we found and reviewed relevant tests in Spanish and ESL related to the target populations. The review resulted in a compilation of tests that measured proficiency, achievement, dominance, and other relevant aspects of language performance. It was discussed whether these tests could be used to meet CLEAR needs; the participants concluded that the basic need was for tests in Spanish and ESL that covered cognitive-academic language skills primarily and social language secondarily.

Of all the tests reviewed, the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT) came the closest to providing adequate measurement of cognitive-academic languages skills in both Spanish and ESL. Therefore, the IPT was chosen as a test to be used for selected CLEAR studies. Other useful tests identified were the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery subtests of picture vocabulary,

analogies, passage comprehension, and antonyms/synonyms (all available in Spanish and English and found to highly reliable and valid). It was agreed that the following tests would be developed in this study to fill gaps in specific areas: (1) an oral proficiency test for Spanish and English, suitable for students in 5th and 6th grades (see *The CLEAR Oral Proficiency Exam (COPE) Project Report*, 1987), and (2) a test for assessing rudimentary skills for students in Spanish FLES programs, to be presented here.

Because of the structure of FLES programs across the country, they are traditionally coordinated by an individual school, local district, private language school, or parent-teacher association. These programs are generally autonomous and use curricula they have developed themselves or have adapted from other local sources. For testing purposes, the programs tend to develop their own assessment instruments (usually criterion-referenced tests) if they use a formal measurement at all.

FLES programs nationwide vary in goals, amount of time spent per week in the foreign language class, curricula used, amount and type of teacher training, etc. As a result of this variation in types of programs, there have been few instruments that have been used on a nationwide basis to assess progress of FLES students. There is one major exception, however -- the National French Contest- FLES *(Le Concours National de Français),* sponsored annually by the American Association of Teachers of French. This is a French test that has been developed for national assessment of elementary school children in grades 1 - 6. This test is administered to approximately 2,500 students each year from 60 - 80 public and private schools in the U.S. and Canada, and in overseas military schools. The test assesses speaking, reading, and listening skills and covers material from a "representative" FLES curriculum, according to the test developers. There are two levels to the test. Those students who have had under 150 hours of instruction, or those in grades 1 and 2, just take the listening and speaking

portion. Students who have had 150 - 1000 hours of instruction take all three portions of the test. Those students scoring in the top 20% of their class and those scoring at or above 75% are administered an additional speaking section which is scored by the National French Contest. These students are then eligible for national recognition, depending on how they perform.

With background information on the one nationally administered FLES test and other locally-developed FLES tests, we aimed to develop a type of Spanish achievement test that could be used in a wide variety of FLES programs for fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. Our purpose was to develop a listening and reading test that would be used to determine achievement in a typical FLES curriculum.

II. Test Development

Tests Reviewed. In order to benefit as much as possible from work done by previous test developers, we reviewed existing Spanish FLES tests that we found in the ERIC and CLEAR databases, in bibliographies from the Educational Testing Service, and through our contacts with FLES programs nationwide. One test that is nationally available through the ERIC system is the *Exámen de Español Para Escuelas Elementales* (Spanish FLES Test), developed by West Hartford Public Schools, Connecticut (1976). This is a multiple-choice test of Spanish reading and listening comprehension for grades 4 - 6. For the listening section, students respond to passages on a cassette tape; the reading section includes vocabulary and completion exercises. The test covers material in the West Hartford FLES curriculum which includes such topics as weather, seasons, colors, numbers, sports, rooms of the house, telling time, parts of the body, and present tense verb conjugations.

Another test reviewed was the *Spanish as a Second Language Achievement Test (1976),* by Charles Stansfield. Developed for kindergarten and first grade native English speakers, this listening and speaking test is based on the Spanish as a second language curriculum of several Colorado school districts. The listening test is designed to be a measure of the development of elementary grammatical concepts in children. Each item tested is accompanied by a picture that deals with recognition of a preposition, verb ending, pronoun, article, or adjectival or noun ending. The speaking test is based on the kindergarten and first grade curriculum that emphasize the child's mastery of vocabulary pertaining to foods, objects in the home, objects in the school, animals, and parts of the body.

An additional FLES test examined was the *FLES Spanish Test (1985)* for students in grades 5 and 6, developed by Blacksburg, Virginia teachers in conjunction with the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The goal of the Blacksburg FLES program is to "establish the sounds and structure of Spanish as well as to create a positive atttitude toward learning a foreign language." Approximately one-fourth of the time is spent on cultural aspects. The curriculum includes such topics as: understanding commands, greetings, numbers, days of the week, months, telling time, colors, classroom objects, family, alphabet, weather, parts of the body, clothing, foods, and culture. The main student text for the course is *Español Comencemos (C. Schmidt, McGraw-Hill)*; the teacher also uses a variety of resource materials. The test for the program includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing sections. The listening section is composed entirely of commands based on Total Physical Response techniques. The speaking section requires the student to answer basic questions asked by the teacher, e.g., *¿Cómo está? ¿Qué tal? ¿Qué lleva?* The reading section tests vocabulary items, and the writing section includes translation and dictation exercises.

The content of the tests described and others we reviewed included much of the material covered in a "typical" FLES class, and thus material we wanted to include in our FLES test as well. The major difference in the development of our test, however, was that we were interested in **contextualizing** the format as much as possible. In other words, instead of testing each item in isolation, e.g., *El libro es . . . (blanco, blanca, blancos, blancas),* we were interested in putting the items in context whenever possible, e.g., showing a picture of a classroom and asking questions about the objects shown, or presenting a story and having the students answer questions on it. Understandably, most of the tests we

reviewed were based on discrete point references rather than on a contextualized format. It is a real challenge to develop a contextualized test for FLES classes that are very limited in scope. Our goal was to see how much we could contextualize the basic information students learn in a FLES program.

Curricula Reviewed. Materials from five FLES programs whose curricula are readily available were examined for clues to what a typical, non-content based, FLES curriculum might be like. Two of the curricula examined were developed in Orange County, Florida. The *Un Poquito de Español* program (1977) by Margaret Morgan Mabry, provides 29 weeks of Spanish lessons for fifth or sixth grade students, with a frequency of 1 to 3 classes per week. The 1986 version of this curriculum, *El Arco Iris de la Amistad,* by Leslie Ann Curry and others has been expanded to include at least grades K-3 (the upper limit for grade appropriateness is not specified) with twice-weekly lessons of 30 minutes each (15 minutes of instruction and a 15-minute activity period per lesson). *A FLES Handbook (French, Spanish, German: Grades K - 6)* (1979), developed by Johanna Federspiel and others at Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina, gives guidelines for teaching French, Spanish, and German to students in grades K - 6. *Spanish for Children (Springboard to Foreign Language Series, 1985),* of the Language School of Seattle, Washington, is a series of 10 taped lessons based on the Total Physical Response approach to language learning. The *Spanish ¡Alive! Spanish for Young Children* program (1986) developed by Loni Dai Zovi provides detailed lesson plans for 30-minute, twice-weekly Spanish classes. The lessons revolve around core stories and are reinforced by appropriate activities.

The various curricula turned out to be quite homogeneous in terms of material covered and overall instructional approach. The overall goal of FLES

programs is not to achieve proficiency in the language, but to provide ". . . controlled exposure to simple vocabulary, songs, dialogues, and cultural information" *(A FLES Handbook, 1979).* In addition, the supportive learning environment stressed by most FLES programs is designed ". . . to create an awareness of other languages and cultures, to spark an interest in further study, and finally to make this first contact with a second language an enjoyable one" *(Spanish for Children, 1985).*

Many of these programs are begun in kindergarten or first grade. Perhaps because children this young do not have fully developed reading skills in their native language, these programs emphasize listening and speaking skills over reading and writing skills, a pattern which persists, with few exceptions, in the upper elementary grades. Instructors therefore rely heavily on realia, visuals, and other props; tasks and activities generally involve songs, games, or some form of physical activity. The language forms presented are usually limited to vocabulary items for everyday or classroom activities, simple sentences, and simple question-answer sequences, rather than extended discourse. Programs are generally designed to be taught by an itinerant language-proficient teacher instead of the regular classroom teacher. The most significant variation among the curricula examined is the instruction time, which ranged from 30 minutes to 2 1/2 hours per week.

Test Construction. The FLES curriculum emphasizes expansion of target language vocabulary within certain highly constrained topic areas. This presented a significant problem for test development -- namely, that the language experience of these students is still limited enough that any extended text quickly surpasses their comprehension skills. The test format therefore had to be largely dependent upon pictures for contextual support for the items. In terms of test development, this meant that the majority of the test items were limited to those concepts that could be unambiguously

presented in visual form. It was decided that the test would focus on listening and reading skills only, leaving open the possibility of using the CLEAR Oral Proficiency Exam (COPE) for assessing speaking skills. Writing skills would not be addressed at all because FLES curricula usually do not emphasize writing.

The following concepts common to all curricula were selected for testing: 1) common greetings and expressions, 2) family relationships, 3) fruits and vegetables, 4) common classroom objects, 5) months and seasons, 6) colors, 7) telling time, 8) numbers, 9) clothing, 10) days of the week, and 11) parts of the body. Test developers wrote items for each category and the resulting items were checked for content validity by specialists in elementary school foreign language programs. Only those items passing approval were integrated into the overall test structure.

The test items are either multiple choice or true false. This format was chosen for two reasons. First, as noted above, most FLES programs emphasize language recognition skills rather than language production skills, so this format is consistent with the type of language exposure these students are most likely to receive. Second, this format allows for an easily graded test for which machine scorable answer sheets may be used.

The final draft of the test was reviewed by national experts, both teachers and program administrators, who pointed out potential areas of difficulty in content and/or form. In response to their recommendations, items and drawings were either revised or eliminated, with the result that the total number of test items was cut by 15%. The draft was then released for pilot testing. The following is a description of each section:

LISTENING SECTION

Part 1 **Describe the Picture** Format: Yes/No

Students indicate whether a spoken statement describes a picture. Tests specific structures and vocabulary items.

Part 2 **Describe Wonko to Your Friends** Format: Multiple choice

Students indicate the correct number of body parts. Tests numbers and parts of the body.

Part 3 **Describe Wonko to Your Parents** Format: Multiple choice

Students identify the correct body parts. Tests numbers and parts of the body.

READING SECTION

Part 1 **Telling Time** Format: Multiple choice

Students select correct time as pictured on various clocks. Tests ability to give time correctly.

Part 2 **The Family** Format: Multiple choice sentence completion

Students fill in information about different families according to pictures. Tests vocabulary of family relationships.

Part 3 **Colors and Food** Format: Multiple choice

Students identify various pictured foods and their typical colors. Tests food and color vocabularies.

Part 4 **The Classroom** Format: Multiple choice cloze

Students select answers to complete a cloze passage description of a classroom. Tests simple grammatical and idiomatic structures and classroom objects.

Part 5 **Clothing** Format: Yes/No

Students read a short passage about a shopping trip, then indicate whether pictured items were purchased. Tests clothing vocabulary.

Part 6 **Months and Days of the Week** Format: Yes/No & Multiple choice

Students answer questions according to various calendars. Tests months, days, and dates.

Part 7 **Seasons of the Year** Format: Multiple choice

Students select descriptions to match pictures of seasonal activities. Tests seasons and weather expressions.

Part 8 **Greetings and Phrases** Format: Multiple choice

Students select the appropriate response to familiar social questions. Tests ability to comprehend and respond appropriately to basic social questions. This is the only section not dependent on visual context.

III. Pilot Testing

The purpose of the pilot testing was to determine the appropriateness of test content, item design, and general test construction for grade 4 - 6 students of Spanish FLES.

The FLES-Spanish pilot testing took place at three locations in late May and early June of 1988. A total of 121 children were tested at three sites: Maryland (10), Michigan (99) and Vermont (12). Sites were deliberately chosen to reflect a wide range of FLES program configurations: a three year before-school program offering two half hour classes a week, a three-year program with classes meeting 1 hour a week, and a seven-year sequential program meeting 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Through this stratification process, we hoped to determine the range and flexibility of the FLES-Spanish test. The following are summaries of the three programs and test administrations at each site.

Three-year before-school program, two half-hour classes a week

This FLES class is offered before school to third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. There are two sections of the class, beginning and intermediate. Only the students in the intermediate class (fifth and sixth graders) who have had two years of Spanish were administered the test. The teacher administered the Listening component and project staff supervised the Reading component of the test. This FLES program places instructional emphasis on oral/aural skills. Thus, the teacher anticipated that the reading section, particularly parts involving connected discourse, would be difficult for the children. Test results have shown, however, that this is not the case, and the children who had had little reading instruction did indeed perform well on the reading section of the test.

Seven-year sequential program, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week

This FLES program has been in operation since 1982, offering FLES instruction in grades K-6 in French, German and Spanish. Foreign language teachers visit the classroom daily: 15 minutes for kindergarteners, 20 minutes for grades 1 - 3, and 30 minutes for grades 4 - 6. In most cases the teacher travels from room to room, providing instruction in the regular classroom setting. In buildings where extra space is available, classes are conducted in a foreign language room with the students moving to this location. Instruction is completely in the foreign language. K - 2 instruction is almost entirely oral; reading and writing in the foreign language begins in the third grade. A Spanish teacher in the program administered the FLES test to her students and three additional classes.

Three-year program, 1 hour per day

This FLES program was initiated three years ago by one of the regular classroom instructors who is fluent in Spanish. Thanks to the small number of students enrolled in this school (60), it has been possible to offer Spanish to all grades, including a three day a week pre-kindergarten group. As much as possible, Spanish instruction reinforces the goals of the core school curriculum. Thus, the students may have a math lesson in Spanish.

The fifth and sixth graders receive the greatest amount of Spanish instruction since their classroom teacher is also the Spanish instructor. During fifth/sixth grade art, music, and science which are taught by other teachers, the Spanish instructor teaches Spanish to the other grades in the school. Actual exposure to Spanish ranges from 15 minutes a week for the kindergarteners to more than one hour per day for fifth and sixth graders. Both components of the test were administered by the Spanish teacher to the fifth and sixth grade group.

Much concern was expressed by the instructor of this program about the FLES Test due to the unstructured nature of their Spanish program. This program currently follows no set textbook but rather the general curricular goals and student interests. In recognition of the fact that many FLES programs are driven by priorities determined by the teacher rather than the school district, this group was included so observations about the applicability of the FLES-Spanish test could be made. Unfortunately, at the time this report is being written their results are not yet available.

Test Format and Content

During the piloting process observations on the test format and content were made by teachers, students, and project staff. These observations are described below followed by a general summary.

Listening Section. During the test administration at the before-school program, it was observed that instructions to the teacher/test administrator would need to be "fleshed out" in order to achieve standard presentation of testing cues across all test administrations. In addition, certain procedural instructions, such as "go on to the next page," would ensure that students keep pace with the test.

The daily FLES program reported that this section posed no particular difficulties. It was recommended that this section be expanded to allow for a more thorough testing of structure and lexicon.

Reading Section. Again, during test administration at the before-school program, it was observed that additional procedural clarifications would be useful. In this instance, not only to ensure that students understand how to respond to each part of the test, but also to guarantee a smooth transition between the two sections of the test.

The reading section did not pose any particular difficulties for students enrolled in the daily program. It was observed that any confusion or

misunderstandings which did arise appeared to be connected to the placement of illustrations and text. It was recommended that the test format be adjusted so as not to interfere with student comprehension.

Summary of test revisions. Based on these observations, the following changes were made to the FLES-Spanish test:

1) Instructions in the test booklet and listening script were rewritten or inserted as needed.

2) Illustrations were clarified and typographical errors were corrected.

3) Test format was revised so as to be easier to read.

4) An Administrator's Handbook was written to provide guidelines for the administration of the Listening and Reading sections. To ensure standard presentation of the listening cues, the Listening Script was annotated and inserted in the handbook. Annotations consist of remarks concerning number of repetitions, voice tone and level, and timing.

IV. Test Analysis

The statistical quality of the FLES test was assessed from three perspectives: reliability, difficulty, and discrimination. A total of 109 tests proved suitable for analysis in this study. Due to the very different natures of the Listening and Reading sections, analysis was done for each section independently. Furthermore, since within each section some items are true/false questions and others are multiple-choice questions, it would be erroneous to treat the within-section items as homogenous and analyze them as an integral test. Therefore the test data were divided into the following four parts and analysis was done for each part separately:

(1) Listening Comprehension, true/false (TF) type (items 1-14)
(2) Listening Comprehension, multiple-choice (MC) type (items 15-20)
(3) Reading Comprehension, true/false type (items 49-57,59, 60)
(4) Reading Comprehension, multiple-choice type (items 21-48, 58, 61-73)

The software package used to perform the test analysis is TAP: Test Analysis Package on the IBM-PC, Version 2.0 (Harnisch, Horwitz and Wang, 1985).

Reliability

The reliability of a test indicates the extent to which it measures student performance in a consistent manner. Among the many indices of test reliability, "internal consistency," or the extent to which items in a test are homogeneous and internally consistent, was examined. The formula used for calculating the internal consistency index was Kuder and Richardson's KR-20

formula, which is an estimate of the average of all the possible split-half correlations based on the means and variances of the items scored dichotomously (Cronbach, 1984). The resulting reliability coefficients for the four parts of the FLES test are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability of FLES.

Part	No. of items	Rel. coeff.
1. Listening Comprehension, TF type	14	.66
2. Listening Comprehension, MC type	6	.62
3. Reading Comprehension, TF type	11	.70
4. Reading Comprehension, MC type	42	.95

With reliability being a direct function of test length, it should not be surprising that the reliability coefficients of the first three parts are much lower than that of Part Four, whose test length is 3-7 times longer. Given the small number of items in the first three parts, the obtained reliability coefficients (.66, .62, .70) can be considered adequate. The reliability of Part Four (.95) is, of course, a very satisfactory figure.

Difficulty

Item difficulty is measured as the percentage of correct responses for each item. In other words, it is the proportion of students answering the item correctly. Therefore, the higher the frequency figure obtained for the difficulty index, the easier the item is. (It is for this reason that "facility index" is sometimes preferred over "difficulty index.") As such, the level of difficulty of an item depends on two things: (a) the inherent difficulty of the item, and (b) the ability level of the examinees who take the test. Both factors determine whether an item difficulty is appropriate for the group of examinees being tested.

Item difficulty is computed by dividing the total number of students passing the item by the total number of students. For an item to be of middle difficulty, the difficulty index should be midway between a perfect item score (1.00) and the score that would be expected if the answer was marked at random (for a T/F item this chance score is .50; for a 3-option MC item, this chance score is .33). Therefore the optimal difficulty index should be .75 for the T/F items and .67 for the MC items. The item difficulty indices are reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Item Difficulty Indices of the FLES Test.

Item #	Difficulty	Item #	Difficulty	Item #	Difficulty
1	.89	26	.75	51	.76
2	.93	27	.88	52	.71
3	.89	28	.72	53	.51
4	.97	29	.72	54	.56
5	.93	30	.61	55	.64
6	.94	31	.93	56	.61
7	.93	32	.78	57	.42
8	.93	33	.84	58	.84
9	.47	34	.80	59	.84
10	.90	35	.84	60	.86
11	.94	36	.75	61	.81
12	.95	37	.91	62	.83
13	.83	38	.64	63	.79
14	.94	39	.85	64	.88
15	.94	40	.65	65	.77
16	.93	41	.58	66	.76
17	.69	42	.76	67	.77
18	.77	43	.61	68	.67
19	.79	44	.28	69	.78
20	.97	45	.69	70	.72
21	.63	46	.59	71	.77
22	.44	47	.59	72	.70
23	.87	48	.74	73	.70
24	.86	49	.70		
25	.77	50	.65		

A quick examination of Table 2 indicates that 15 out of the 73 items have a difficulty index of over .90, suggesting that the test may be too easy for the group. Those 15 items are: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 31, 37. Of these 15 items, 13 are in the Listening Comprehension section. This low difficulty level in the Listening Comprehension section resulted in lack of variability in score distribution, which may have explained the lower reliability of the Listening Comprehension section.

Table 3 summarizes the item difficulty levels for each part of the test. The mean item difficulty is the sum of the difficulty of each item divided by the total number of test items. The standard deviation of the item difficulty is a measure of the variability of the distribution of item difficulties. In other words, it indicates the extent to which a test contains items of varying difficulty.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Item Difficulties by Part.

Part	Mean of item difficulty	Std. dev. of item difficulty
1. Listening Comprehension, TF type	.89	.13
2. Listening Comprehension, MC type	.85	.11
3. Reading Comprehension, TF type	.66	.13
4. Reading Comprehension, MC type	.73	.13

Judging against the optimal difficulty levels described above (.75 for the TF parts and .67 for the MC parts), we can see that the Listening Comprehension section, particularly the MC type, indeed tends to be too easy. The TF-type questions in the Reading Comprehension section are somewhat difficult; whereas the MC-type questions are a little too easy.

Discrimination

Item discrimination is computed as the point-biserial correlation between the item score and the test score. A high correlation coefficient indicates high discriminatory power. Due to restrictions incurred when a continous variable (in the present case, the total test score) is correlated with a dichotomous variable (in the present case, answering an item correctly or incorrectly), the highest possible point-biserial correlation coefficient is .80 instead of the usual 1.00. The item discrimination indices for the FLES test are reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Item Discrimination Indices of the FLES Test.

Item #	Discri-mination	Item #	Discri-mination	Item #	Discri-mination
1	.29	26	.48	51	.55
2	.26	27	.64	52	.62
3	.52	28	.62	53	.40
4	.17	29	.62	54	.53
5	.57	30	.59	55	.55
6	.22	31	.51	56	.60
7	.71	32	.65	57	.26
8	.57	33	.68	58	.74
9	.36	34	.61	59	.43
10	.55	35	.63	60	.58
11	.60	36	.69	61	.65
12	.34	37	.65	62	.71
13	.37	38	.28	63	.57
14	.53	39	.62	64	.71
15	.39	40	.30	65	.70
16	.55	41	.45	66	.60
17	.74	42	.72	67	.60
18	.70	43	.60	68	.58
19	.64	44	.23	69	.59
20	.43	45	.59	70	.75
21	.30	46	.53	71	.55
22	.32	47	.50	72	.52
23	.56	48	.58	73	.65
24	.55	49	.47		
25	.57	50	.52		

From Table 4 we can see that in general the FLES test discriminates fairly well among students of different levels of ability. There are some items, however, which have questionable discriminatory power (less than .30) : 1, 2, 4, 6, 38, 44 and 57.

In sum, analysis of the test data indicates that the FLES test is a test of optimal quality. Except for a small proportion of the test items, most items function well in measuring the listening and reading abilities of FLES students studying Spanish. The reliability of the Listening Comprehension section can be strengthened by either lengthening the test or revising the items with inadequate difficulty level and/or discriminatory power.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Thanks to recommendations by reviewers, the field-testing process, and assessment of the statistical quality, the FLES test has been revised and is now a highly appropriate instrument for CLEAR research needs. Comments from reviewers and feedback collected during the field-testing process allowed project staff to improve test format and administration procedures. In response to the statistical assessment, project staff were able to confirm the pertinence of content specific comments of field-test administrators and revise the content of a few isolated items (see pilot testing section for details). Overall, however, very few changes were made in response to the statistical assessment.

Field testing results show that this test should be used to determine "mastery" rather than discriminate between different levels of "proficiency." Thus, the low difficulty level of the Listening section is not a concern. This result merely indicates that the majority of the examinees were able to answer the test questions correctly. The test seeks to establish such a base line of what a 4th, 5th, or 6th grade FLES student should know. In the case of our field test examinees, all can be said to have "mastered" the basic vocabulary and structures that are generally taught in FLES programs. It should be noted, however, that the overall discriminatory power of the test is good, particularly in the reading section. Thus, it should be possible to see some distinctions in performance between different types of FLES programs.

Test reliability is of primary importance for any kind of test. The statistical analysis of this test showed that the test items are generally quite satisfactory. Administration of this test as part of a CLEAR research study in the fall of 1988 is expected to furnish additional data on the reliability and validity of the test items. In addition, such data may allow

specific cut-off levels of mastery to be devised (beginning, intermediate, advanced).

In terms of what we have learned about children's language learning through the development and field testing of this test, one of the most interesting results was the highly competent performance of students on the reading section who had had no prior experience in reading Spanish. This seems to indicate that reading skills do indeed transfer from the student's first language to the second. Students could read and understand concepts in the written language that they had only spoken or heard before. This may have wider implications for the introduction of reading at an earlier time in FLES classes. We will be examining this reading phenomenon in more detail in the next research study.

From our experience in the development of this test we have also learned the importance of providing a clear format and structure (placement of illustrations, supporting text, etc.) for the test so that students can display their real abilities and not be misled or confused by the format. We also became aware of the tremendous variation in regional and national dialects of Spanish. It turned out to be very difficult to find names for commonly-taught items that were universally recognized by native Spanish speakers across the U.S. as well in Spanish-speaking countries around the world. The resultant Spanish words used in the test have been reviewed by a wide range of native speakers and are widely understood and as free as possible of dialect bias.

For future use of the FLES Test for research purposes, we recommend that: (1) an audiotape be made for the listening section to standardize test administration, and (2) the test be translated into/adapted for other languages so that FLES classes in languages other than Spanish can take advantage of the test. There have been requests from school districts for

both French and German versions of the test. CLEAR Study 6.6 will consider both these recommendations for the 1988-89 research project.

References

Cronbach, L.J. (1984). Essentials of pyschological testing (4th Ed.). New York: Harper and Row.

Harnish, D.L., Horwitz, J., & Wang, L.S. (1985). TAP: Test Analysis Package on the IBM-PC (version 2.0). Champaign, IL: Institute for Child Behavior and Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

APPENDICES

Booklet # _____

FLES TEST
SPANISH

A Test for Students in **F**oreign **L**anguage
in the **E**lementary **S**chool Programs

Developed by Lynn Thompson and Gina Richardson

Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd St., NW
Washington, DC 20037

FLES TEST
SPANISH

A Test for Students in **F**oreign **L**anguage
in the **E**lementary **S**chool Programs

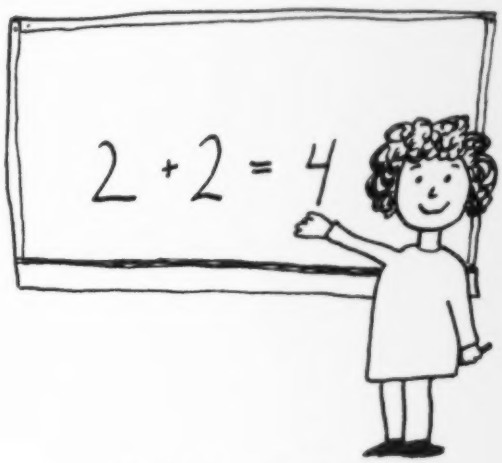
This test will begin on **the back of this page**
Please turn over the page and wait for instructions
from your teacher.

Listening, Part 1 — Describe the Picture

Listen as your teacher reads these instructions:

For each picture, you will hear a sentence. If the sentence describes the picture, mark "A" on your answer sheet. If it does **NOT** describe the picture, mark "B" on your answer sheet.

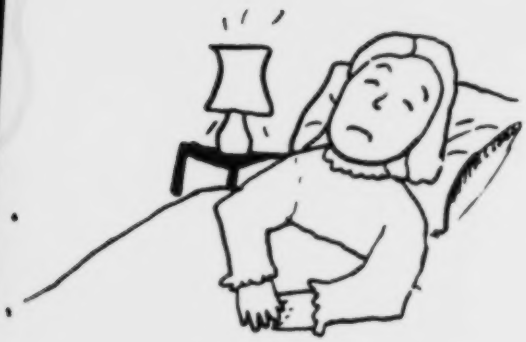
1. A) Sí B) No



2. A) Sí B) No

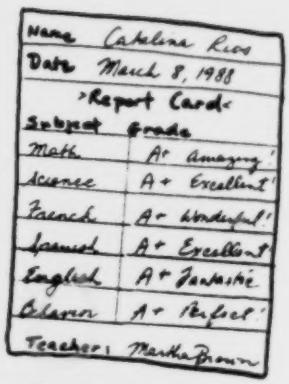
3. A) Sí B) No

4. A) Sí B) No

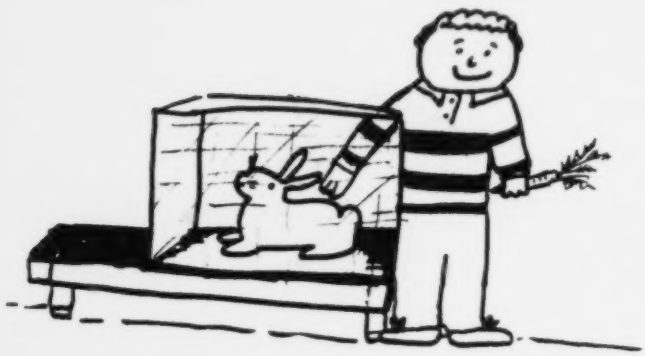


5. A) Sí B) No

6. A) Sí B) No

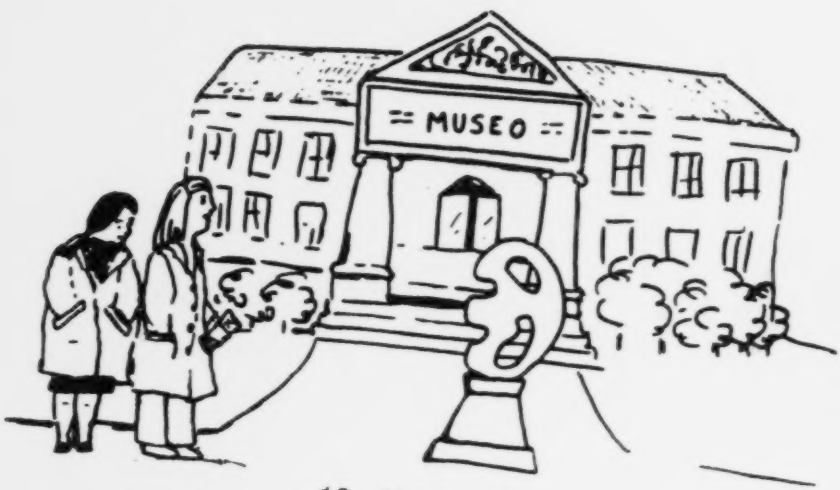


7. A) Sí B) No



8. A) Sí B) No

9. A) Sí B) No



10. A) Sí B) No

(Part 1, continued)

11. A) Sí B) No

12. A) Sí B) No

13. A) Sí B) No

14. A) Sí B) No

Listening, Part 2 — Describe Wonko to Your Friends

Listen as your teacher reads these instructions:

On your way to school this morning you met Wonko, an alien from Mars. Using the picture, answer the following questions you hear about Wonko. Mark the letter (A, B, or C) of the correct answer on your answer sheet.

15. A) tres
    B) seis
    C) cuatro

16. A) cuatro
    B) dos
    C) cinco

17. A) uno
    B) dos
    C) tres

Listening, Part 3 — Describe Wonko to Your Parents

Listen as your teacher reads these instructions:

Instructions: You told your parents about meeting Wonko on your way to school this morning. They want to know what he's like. Complete the sentences you hear by marking the letter (A, B, or C) of the correct answer on your answer sheet.

18. A) piernas
    B) narices
    C) brazos

19. A) ojos
    B) orejas
    C) piernas

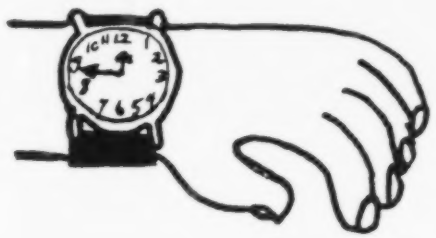
20. A) oreja
    B) pierna
    C) boca

Reading, Part 1 Telling Time

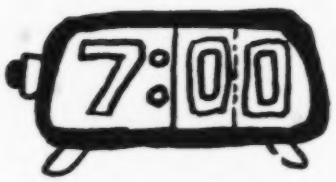
Instructions: What time is it in each picture? For each question, one of the statements (A, B, or C) correctly identifies what time it is in the picture. Decide which statement is correct for each "clock" and mark your answer on your answer sheet.

¿Qué hora es?

21. A) Son las tres y diez.
    B) Son las tres menos diez.
    C) Son las tres menos dos.



22. A) Son las doce menos diez.
    B) Son las nueve y doce.
    C) Son las doce menos cuarto.



23. A) Son las siete.
    B) Son las seis.
    C) Son las dos.

Reading, Part 2 The Family

Instructions: Look at the drawings of the families below. Complete the sentences by marking in the letters for the correct responses on your answer sheet.

La Familia de Julio

Hay _____ personas en la familia de Julio.

(24) A. cinco
B. seis
C. cuatro

Julio tiene dos _____ y una _____.

(25) A. hermanos
B. hermanas
C. mamás

(26) A. hermana
B. hermano
C. hormiga

La Familia de Soledad

La familia de Soledad tiene _____ personas.

(27) A. cuatro
B. cinco
C. seis

Soledad es la _____ de la familia.

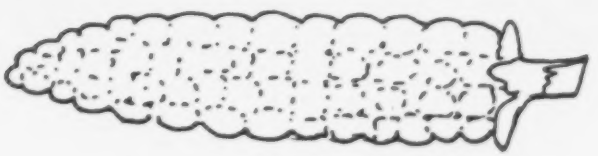
(28) A. hijo
B. hija
C. mamá

Ella no tiene hermanos, pero tiene un _____.

(29) A. abuelo
B. perro
C. tío

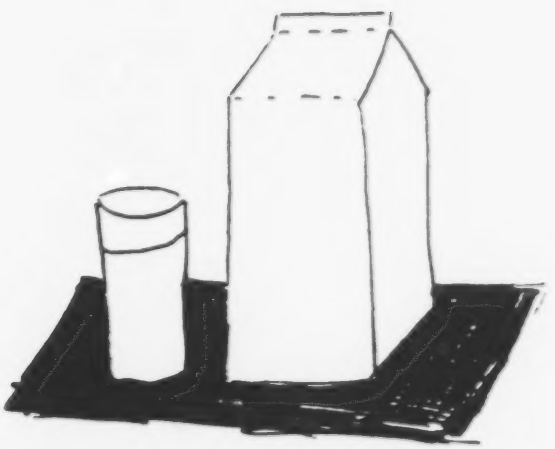
Reading, Part 3 Colors and Food

Instructions: Look at the drawings of the food below. Each drawing is followed by two questions. Mark the correct answer for each question on your answer sheet.



30. ¿Qué es ésto?
    A) bistec
    B) jamón
    C) maíz

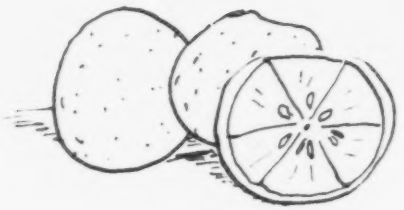
31. ¿De qué color es?
    A) gris
    B) amarillo
    C) verde



32. ¿Qué es ésto?
    A) carne
    B) leche
    C) pimienta

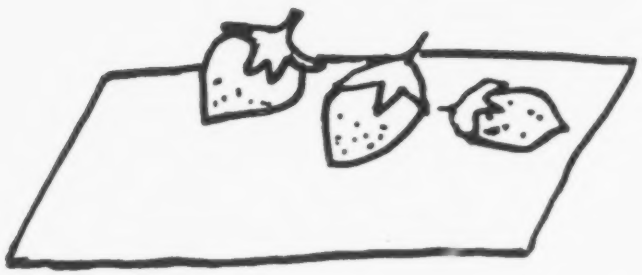
33. ¿De qué color es?
    A) blanca
    B) amarilla
    C) verde

(Part 3, continued)



34. ¿Qué es ésto?
    A) una piña
    B) una naranja
    C) una pera

35. ¿De qué color es?
    A) anaranjada
    B) azul
    C) gris



36. ¿Qué son éstas?
    A) unas naranjas
    B) unas manzanas
    C) unas fresas

37. ¿De qué color son?
    A) rojas
    B) negras
    C) azules

38. ¿Qué es esto?
    A) pimienta
    B) lechuga
    C) sal

39. ¿De qué color es?
    A) verde
    B) azul
    C) amarillo

CANADÁ
ESTADOS UNIDOS
MEXICO

Reading, Part 4 — The Classroom

Instructions: Look at the picture to your left. Complete the following paragraph by marking in the letters for the correct responses on your answer sheet.

Ésta es la clase de español. La maestra _____la señora Sanz.

(40) A. eres
B. es
C. son

Hay dos niños y dos niñas en la clase. Un alumno _____ Paco.

(41) A. te llamas
B. me llamo
C. se llama

Paco quiere hacer una pregunta. Él _____ la mano.

(42) A. levanta
B. baja
C. come

Una de _____ se llama Elena. Elena está _____. La otra

(43) A. las naranjas
B. las alumnas
C. las reglas

(44) A. de papel
B. de pan
C. de pie

alumna, María, está sentada. Ella toma papel y lápiz. Va a _____.

(45) A. escribir
B. comer
C. escuchar

El salón de clase es muy bonito. Hay tres ventanas en el salón. Una ventana está abierta y dos ventanas están _____. La puerta

(46) A. abiertas
B. cerradas
C. contentas

está _____. En la pared hay _____ de los Estados Unidos.

(47) A. contenta
B. abierta
C. cerrada

(48) A. un libro
B. un mapa
C. un traje

Reading, Part 5 Clothing

Instructions: Read the following paragraph:

La señora Mendoza va de compras. Sus hijos necesitan ropa nueva. Ella compra una corbata, una chaqueta, y unos pantalones para su hijo Manuel. También compra unas cosas para su hija Pilar. Señora Mendoza compra un vestido, una falda, y unos zapatos.

Instructions: Now, for each article of clothing, mark **A** on your answer sheet if señora Mendoza **did** buy it, or **B** if she **did not** buy it.

49. A) Sí B) No

50. A) Sí B) No

51. A) Sí B) No

52. A) Sí B) No

53. A) Sí B) No

54. A) Sí B) No

55. A) Sí B) No

56. A) Sí B) No

57. A) Sí B) No

Reading, Part 6 Months and Days of the Week

Instructions: For each calendar page listed below, there are three questions. Mark the answer to each question (A, B, or C) on your answer sheet.

58. ¿Qué día de la semana es el cumpleaños de Carlos?
    A) junio
    B) julio
    C) jueves

59. ¿Es el diecinueve de junio el Festival de los Niños?
    A) Sí
    B) No

60. ¿Tiene junio treinta y uno días?
    A) Sí
    B) No

JUNIO

D	L	M	M	J	V	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 Cumpleaños de Carlos	17	18
19	20 Festival de los niños	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

61. ¿Cuál es la fecha del día de Colón?
    A) Lunes, doce.
    B) Jueves, doce.
    C) Sábado, doce.

62. ¿Cuántos días hay en octubre?
    A) 29
    B) 30
    C) 31

63. ¿Cuál día de celebración hay en sábado?
    A) El día de Colón
    B) Octubre
    C) Halloween

OCTUBRE

D	L	M	M	J	V	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 El día de Colón	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween

Reading, Part 7 Seasons of the Year

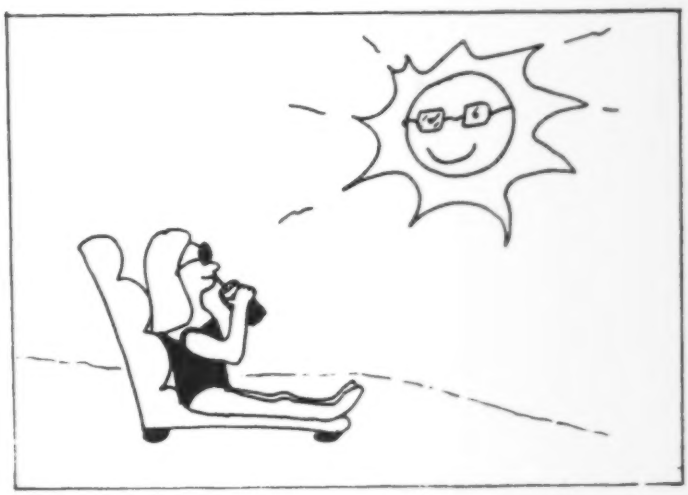
Instructions: Look at each picture below. For each question, mark the letter of the statement that correctly answers the question.

64. ¿Qué tiempo hace?
    A) Hace frío.
    B) Está lloviendo.
    C) Hace mucho calor.

65. ¿Qué estación es?
    A) Es el otoño.
    B) Es el invierno.
    C) Es la primavera.

66. ¿Qué tiempo hace?
    A) Está nevando.
    B) Hace viento.
    C) Hace calor.

67. ¿Qué estación es?
    A) Es el verano.
    B) Es el invierno.
    C) Es el otoño.



Reading, Part 8 Greetings and Phrases

Instructions: Read each question. Then, read the three possible answers. On your answer sheet, mark the letter of the statement that is an appropriate response to the question.

68. ¿Cómo estás?
    A) Me llamo Daniel.
    B) Hace calor.
    C) Bien, gracias.

69. ¿Cómo te llamas?
    A) Tengo una hermana.
    B) Me llamo Adela.
    C) Hablo español.

70. ¿Dónde vives?
    A) Vivo en la calle León.
    B) Quiero comprar pan.
    C) Voy el jueves.

71. ¿Cuántos años tienes?
    A) Tengo mucha sed.
    B) Tengo diez años.
    C) Tengo hambre.

72. ¿Hablas español?
    A) Sí, estoy enfermo.
    B) Sí, es domingo.
    C) Sí, un poquito.

73. ¿Qué día es hoy?
    A) Hace mucho frío.
    B) Es miércoles.
    C) Es el verano.

¡FIN!

CAL

Center for
Applied
Linguistics

Specifications for the FLES Test of Beginning Spanish

Skills tested: Listening and Reading

Type of test: Achievement test

Grade levels: 4th, 5th, and 6th

Intensity of Instruction: From 1-3 hours per week over a period of 1 to 6 years

Format: Multiple choice and true-false. No special equipment is required for administration; answers are recorded on a machine-scorable answer sheet.

Testing Time: 40 - 45 minutes

Goal: To develop a test for beginning Spanish as taught in the typical FLES program. The test is to be used in FLES programs to determine achievement in the relatively homogeneous FLES curriculum.

Concepts to be tested:

1. Common greetings and expressions
2. Family relationships
3. Fruits and vegetables
4. Common classroom objects
5. Months and seasons
6. Colors
7. Telling time
8. Numbers
9. Clothing
10. Days of the week

Curricula/Materials Consulted:

El Arco Iris de la Amistad 1986. The Additions, School Volunteer Services, Orange County, Florida.

A FLES Handbook 1979. Third Edition. Foreign Language in the Elementary School, Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Spanish Alive! Spanish for Young Children: Level 1 1986. Lonnie Dai Zovi, Vibrante Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Spanish for Children 1985. The Language School, Seattle, Washington.

Spanish for Mastery 1984. Jean-Paul Valette and Rebecca Valette, D.C. Heath Co.

Un poquito de español 1977. Margaret Morgan Mabry, ed. The Additions, School Volunteer Services, Orange County, Florida.

1118 22nd Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037 (202) 429-9292 Fax (202) 429-9766

TEST ADMINISTRATOR'S HANDBOOK

for

FLES TEST
SPANISH

A Test for Students in **F**oreign **L**anguage in the **E**lementary **S**chool Programs

Center for Applied Linguistics
1118 22nd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 429-9292

TEST ADMINISTRATOR'S HANDBOOK

PREPARING TO ADMINISTER THE TEST

It is important to arrange the desks in the test room so examinees will not be tempted or able to copy from each other. Accordingly, the examinees should be assigned to desks/seats in such a way as to leave one desk/seat empty on either side of each examinee.

Once all examinees are seated, distribute the test booklets, answer sheets and number 2 pencils. Give the following instructions after the above materials have been distributed:

Please do not open your test booklet. For this test, you are going to give all your answers on the answer sheet. Do not write anything on the test booklet. You must use a No. 2 pencil for marking your answers. If you do not have one, please raise your hand.

Distribute pencils as necessary.

ADMINISTERING THE TEST

Follow the procedures below when administering the test. All instructions in bold should be read verbatim.

1. Instruct the examinees how to fill out the answer sheet:

This is a machine-scorable test. You must mark your answers by completely filling in the circle provided; otherwise the machine will not score your test correctly.

Look at the blue side of the answer sheet.

In the white space on the left hand side of the sheet print your last name and then your first name. (Pause)

Do not fill in the identification number. This will be filled in later by the person who scores your test. (Pause)

Are there any questions?
(Check each student's answer sheet to see that it has been filled in correctly.)

2. Instruct the examinees to begin the test:

This test consists of two sections: Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension. The total testing time is one hour.

We are now ready to begin the test. The first section of the test is Listening Comprehension. I will administer this section. Now, open your booklets and read along silently while I read the directions for Listening Part I aloud. (Read the directions in a loud, clear voice).

INSTRUCTIONS: This is Listening, Part 1: Describe the Picture. For each picture, you will hear a sentence. If the sentence describes the picture, mark "A" on your answer sheet. If it does NOT describe the picture, mark "B" on your answer sheet. (Pause)

I will read each statement twice. Remember, if the statement fits the picture, mark A on your answer sheet. If the statement doesn't fit the picture, mark B on your answer sheet. (Pause)

Are there any questions? (Pause: answer any questions they have.)

I will now begin.

(As you read each test item, be sure to pause about 2 seconds between repetitions. Allow students 5 seconds to mark their answers, then proceed to the next item)

Number 1 (2 second pause) **Miguel vive en la calle Central.** (2 second pause) **Miguel vive en la calle Central.**

(5 second pause)

Number 2: Luisa estudia geografía ahora. Luisa estudia geografía ahora.

(5 second pause)

Number 3: El niño tiene una pelota de beisbol. El niño tiene una pelota de beisbol.

(5 second pause)
Number 4: Va a leer un libro. Va a leer un libro.

(5 second pause)

Please go on to the next page of your test booklet.

(2 second pause)

Number 5: Carlota está enferma. Carlota está enferma.

(5 second pause)

Number 6: Hoy es el cumpleaños de Esteban. Hoy es el cumpleaños de Esteban.

(5 second pause)

Number 7: Catalina estudia mucho. Catalina estudia mucho.

(5 second pause)

Number 8: Jorge juega con el perro. Jorge juega con el perro.

(5 second pause)

Number 9: David está cansado. David está cansado.

(5 second pause)

Number 10: Anita y Mercedes están en frente de la escuela. Anita y Mercedes están en frente de la escuela.

(5 second pause)

Please go on to the next page in your test booklet.

(2 second pause)

Number 11: A ella le gusta jugar con sus hermanos. A ella le gusta jugar con sus hermanos.

(5 second pause)

Number 12: El gato de María es muy pequeño. El gato de María es muy pequeño.

(5 second pause)

Number 13: Marisol está triste. Marisol está triste.

(5 second pause)

Number 14: María habla por teléfono. María habla por teléfono.

(5 second pause)

We are now ready for Listening Part II. Please turn the page and read along silently while I read the directions for Part II aloud.

INSTRUCTIONS: This is Listening, Part 2: Describe Wonko to your friends. On your way to school this morning you met Wonko, an alien from Mars. Using the picture, answer the following questions you hear about Wonko. Mark the letter (A, B, or C) of the correct answer on your answer sheet.
(Pause)
Remember in this part, I will be asking you questions about Wonko. You should mark the letter of the correct answer on your answer sheet. Are there any questions? (Pause and answer their questions)

I will now begin.

Number 15: Cuántas manos tiene? Cuántas manos tiene?

(5 second pause)

Number 16: Cuántos ojos tiene? Cuántos ojos tiene?

(5 second pause)

Number 17: Cuántas orejas tiene? Cuántas orejas tiene?

(5 second pause)

We are now ready for Listening Part III. Please turn the page and read along silently while I read the directions for Part III aloud.

INSTRUCTIONS: This is Listening, Part III: Describe Wonko to Your Parents. You told your parents about meeting Wonko on your way to school this morning. They want to know what he's like. Complete the sentences you hear. Mark the letter (A, B, or C) of the correct answer on your answer sheet.

Remember in this part, you will be completing some sentences about Wonko. You should mark the letter of the correct answer on your answer sheet.

Are there any questions? (Pause, answer their questions)

I will now begin.

Number 18: Wonko tiene cuatro.....(pause 2 seconds) **Wonko tiene cuatro.....**

(5 second pause)

Number 19: Wonko tiene tres....(pause 2 seconds) **Wonko tiene tres....**

(5 second pause)

Number 20: Wonko tiene una....(pause 2 seconds) **Wonko tiene una....**

(5 second pause)

We have now finished the Listening section. We are now ready to begin the Reading section. For this part of the test, all instructions and questions are in the test booklet. You should work through each part as quickly as you can. Be sure to read the instructions carefully before starting each section.

Remember, all answers should be marked on your answer sheet. You will have 30 minutes to complete this part of the test.

If you finish early, check your answers and make sure that you have correctly darkened the circles for your choices on the answer sheet. Then wait quietly at your seat until the testing time is up.

You may now begin.

As students begin this section of the test, circulate around the classroom to make sure that they are on the correct page of their booklet. Five minutes before the end of the testing period announce:

You have five more minutes to work on the test.

At the end of that five minutes announce:

STOP. Please pass all answer sheets, to your right. (collect the answer sheets.)

Now, pass all the test booklets, face up, to your right. (collect the test booklets.)

THANK YOU.